

Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) gave the following statement on the House floor against unnecessary defense spending.

Rep. Mike Quigley: Thank you Mister Speaker.

I join my colleague from Illinois to offer a bipartisan, common-sense amendment to the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill.

Our amendment cuts 988 million dollars from the bill, which the Committee added, but the Navy did not request, for a tenth DDG-51 Destroyer.

It also puts the savings toward deficit reduction.

Let me back up for a minute and explain how we got here.

As part of the Department of Defense's new strategy, they are realigning force structure by reducing ground forces and making new investments in more agile air and sea forces.

Toward this end, the Navy has entered into a Multi-Year Procurement, or MYP, arrangement to purchase 9 DDG-51 destroyers over the next five years.

In order to fulfill one year of this MYP arrangement, the Navy requested just over 3 billion dollars in the FY13 budget.

Yet the Committee took it upon itself to give the Navy an extra almost billion dollars it didn't request, and likely doesn't need, for a tenth Destroyer.

To be fair, there was some talk of purchasing a tenth Destroyer.

On March 29, 2012, Sean Stackley, the Navy's acquisition executive, testified before a House Armed Services Subcommittee that he thought through competition he could get 10 ships for the price of 9.

He notes in his testimony that the Navy has "competition on this program – two builders building the 51s, and the competition has been healthy."

He goes on to explain that how he hopes to get a tenth ship out of the multi-year arrangement, saying "our top line ... allowed for nine ships to be budgeted, but when we go out with this procurement, we're going to go out with a procurement that enables the procurement of 10 ships if we're able to achieve the savings that we're targeting across this multiyear [arrangement]."

In other words, Mr. Stackley thinks they can use their leverage and competition to get 10 ships for the price of 9.

But, rather than letting the Navy do its job, and letting the competition acquisition process work - by putting the billion dollars on the table up front, the Committee cut the legs out from under the competitive process.

The addition of the extra billion dollars for another ship by the Committee ends that competition, it ends those negotiations, and it puts a billion dollars on the table that we don't have to spend.

Why not let the acquisition process take its course and see what happens?

I don't think we need a tenth ship, and I am not convinced we need the other 9 either.

But, even for those who do support a tenth destroyer, cutting this funding now does not preclude them from adding it later if its needed.

Unfortunately, this is one of the many examples of the Congress supplanting its own parochial interests for that of our military and what's best for the country as a whole.

This defense bill and all those before it are riddled with funding for weapons, bases, and projects we don't need to keep America safe.

Rather, these bills include projects that support special Member-interests back home.

We can no longer afford to allow the desire to stimulate local economies to drive our defense and foreign policy.

As we emerge from a deep recession, and face a deficit topping one trillion dollars for the fourth straight year, we must right-size our budget.

###

Rep. Quigley Speaks Out Against Unnecessary Defense Spending

Wednesday, 18 July 2012 17:13

